



**Down Town
Park Committee**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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A city that fought nature to save one of its treasures celebrated the event today, in Military Park in Newark.

In a brief ceremony, representatives of corporate Newark joined Mayor Sharpe James to rededicated the Wars of America Monument, created by Gutzon Borglum, following a \$300,000 rehabilitation and restoration effort that saved the massive creation from collapse.

The city and its business community jointly funded the effort.

Wind, weather and rusting underpinnings threatened to destroy the work, the largest metal casting ever done by the man who later would carve the faces of four presidents in the granite of Mount Rushmore in North Dakota.

Tomorrow (May 31) is the 64th anniversary of the dedication of the statue. Forty two figures, greater than life size, and two rearing horses comprise the memorial to those who fought for their country.

Nearly 14,000 stood in pouring rain that May 31 to see the bronze masterpiece unveiled.

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Today's crowd was modest; with Mayor James on the dais were Jerome Greco, vice president of Fidelity Bancorporation and president of the Down Town Park Committee; Mary Ellis Borgum Powers, the sculptor's daughter; Howard and Audrey Shaff, authors of a Borglum biography and Francis J. Riepl, vice president and treasurer of Public Service Electric and Gas Company.

"Newark's corporate citizens -- the companies and commercial and institutional residents of Newark -- are proud to have been a part of the restoration of this priceless work," Greco said. "We're especially proud of Public Service for taking the lead in the fund-raising effort."

Mayor James, Greco and Riepl uncovered a small brass plaque in a parapet surrounding the statute, commemorating the rededication.

Riepl represented Everett L. Morris at the event. Morris, senior executive vice president at PSE&G, served as chairman of the Wars of America Restoration Committee. The committee was formed by the Down Town Park Committee during a multi-million dollar refurbishing of all of Newark's parks. The concentration of the latter committee on the important task of saving the monument was necessary, Greco said, "to make sure Newark didn't lose a priceless Borglum through neglect."

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PSE&G's corporate headquarters was on Park Place, literally a stone's throw from the monument, Riepl noted, adding "you take care of your neighbor when that neighbor is in trouble."

Renaissance Foundry, a Bridgeport, Conn. firm, sealed several large cracks, rebuilt the interior supporting framework, and plugged countless holes that peppered the statue's surface.

Ron Cavalier, the foundry's owner, was in Newark a week ago, searching for two cases of champagne that were said to have been placed in the heads of the horses as a surprise gift for the sculptor from the foundry owner, when the statue was cast in an Italian foundry.

Cavalier searched diligently, but came up dry. "If they were there," he reasoned, "they probably made an interesting lunch for the men who joined together the statue's eight parts, in 1926."

Borglum's other works in Newark are the Seated Lincoln, in front of the Essex County Courthouse on Market Street, and a limestone statue, the Indian and the Puritan, recently restored and placed in Washington Park. It had been part of a traffic island in front of Newark's Public Library, at Broad and Washington Streets.